



Maricopa County

Department of Public Health

Division of Epidemiology and Bio-Defense Preparedness & Response

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Dear Colleague:

We are writing to alert you to a recent increase in the number of cases of *Bordetella Pertussis* ("whooping cough") reported to the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH). These cases represent an increase of 52% over the number of cases reported at this time last year.

Pertussis should be suspected in all symptomatic children and adults regardless of immunization status.

Fully immunized children can still develop Pertussis disease and present with milder symptoms, as vaccine efficacy is not 100% and wanes with age. Typically, infected adults or older children transmit disease to infants in the household. Exposed infants frequently become seriously ill with complications requiring hospitalization.

You can help prevent the transmission of Pertussis by taking the following actions:

- **Consider Pertussis in any patient presenting with a severe or episodic cough of seven days or longer**, and report these suspect cases to the MCDPH. (Suspecting and reporting cases earlier than 14 days or more of cough will increase the chance for positive culture confirmation.)
- In accordance with State regulation ***immediately report all cases or suspect case within 24 hours*** of recognition to the **MCDPH Community Health Nursing at (602) 506-6767. After regular business hours, weekends and holidays call (602) 747-7111.**
- **DO NOT DELAY REPORTING** while awaiting laboratory confirmation.
- Whenever possible, **collect nasopharyngeal specimens from suspect cases.** The enclosed "Physician's Fact Sheet" contains information on how to obtain media and access laboratory services at no charge from the Arizona State Laboratory by contacting the MCDPH.
- **Immediately treat all cases and suspect cases, and prophylax all household contacts** with oral erythromycin for a full 14 days as described in the enclosed "Physician's Fact Sheet." A full 14 days is required to eradicate carriage and prevent bacteriologic relapse and antibiotic resistance.
- Age appropriately, **immunize all children under seven years of age against Pertussis** with DTaP vaccine.

The enclosed "Physician's Fact Sheet" is provided for you use as a quick reference on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of Pertussis. If you have questions or need further assistance, you are welcome to contact the MCDPH office of Community Health Nursing at (602) 506-6767.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Robert Jones, M.D.

Medical Director

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